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OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

Operational activities of the United Nations system for development

Summary of decisions adopted by the executive boards of the United Nations funds and programmes and of actions taken by the organizations of the United Nations system

Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum

SUMMARY

The present addendum is submitted in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 55 of General Assembly resolution 50/120 of 20 December 1995. Moreover, this addendum responds to Economic and Social Council resolutions 1995/50 and 1995/51, both of 28 July 1995.

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I. SUMMARY OF DECISIONS BY THE EXECUTIVE BOARDS OF THE UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT FUNDS AND PROGRAMMES

A. Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Population Fund

Common reporting

1. In the first half of 1996, the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Population Fund (UNDP/UNFPA) had two regular sessions and an annual session.

2. In its first regular session (15-19 January 1996), the Executive Board of UNDP/UNFPA adopted 12 decisions, including decision 96/05, entitled "Preparation of reports for the Economic and Social Council substantive session 1996", and decision 96/07, entitled "Implementation of the successor programming arrangements" (of UNDP).

3. In its decision 96/05, the Executive Board urged the Administrator of UNDP and the Executive Director of UNFPA to ensure that their reports to the Economic and Social Council substantive session 1996 fully addressed issues to be discussed in accordance with relevant decisions and resolutions of the Council and the General Assembly, including Council resolutions 1995/50, 1995/51 and 1995/56 and Assembly resolution 50/120. The Executive Board also requested that the content of the reports of UNDP and UNFPA for the Council substantive session 1996 be such as to enable the Council to compare achievements made by each organization and to identify problems and recommend appropriate actions, on issues relating to, inter alia, allocation of resources, harmonization of procedures and budget presentation, common administrative services and premises and monitoring and evaluation.

4. In the same decision, the Executive Board also requested the Administrator of UNDP and the Executive Director of UNFPA, together with the Executive Directors of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Food Programme (WFP), to agree on a common format and structure for their reports for the Economic and Social Council substantive session 1996. It may also be recalled that paragraph 46 of General Assembly resolution 50/120 urges the members of the United Nations development system to adopt a more collaborative approach in preparing reports at all levels.

Reports on implementation of General Assembly resolutions 47/199 and 50/120

5. The consultations on full implementation of this decision were held within the framework of the Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP). The UNDP and UNFPA reports, in compliance with Economic and Social Council resolutions 1994/33, 1995/50, 1995/51, and 1995/56, were submitted to the Executive Board of UNDP/UNFPA at its annual session 1996 (6-17 May 1996) in the new common reporting format agreed upon by the secretariats of the executive boards of UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP. The Executive Board took note of these reports and agreed that they would be transmitted to the Council with, as annexes: (a) the extract of the report on the annual session of the Board dealing with the joint

UNDP/UNFPA segment, (b) the extract of the report on the annual session of the Board dealing with the implementation of programming arrangements and (c) the extract of the report on the second regular session 1996 of the Board dealing with evaluation (see document DP/1996/19, para. 127).

Successor programming arrangements

6. In its decision 96/07, entitled "Implementation of the successor programming arrangements", the Executive Board reaffirmed that the country cooperation framework would be the central document in the country programming process and that the recipient Government had the primary responsibility for the formulation of the framework, and stressed the importance it attached to the mechanisms for coordination at the country level established in General Assembly resolutions 47/199 and 50/120. The Executive Board noted that the country cooperation frameworks should be based on a realistic estimate of income from both core and non-core resources. The Executive Board requested the Administrator to submit to the Executive Board the country cooperation frameworks as based on national plans and priorities, country-specific circumstances and lessons learned from previous cooperation. The country cooperation frameworks should set measurable targets where possible for the results and impact expected as well as outline management arrangements for execution and implementation, coordination, monitoring and review as well as a resource mobilization strategy.

7. The Executive Board established a procedure of approval of country cooperation frameworks and decided to review the format at the annual session 1997 in light of experience gained therefrom, also taking into consideration country-programming arrangements in UNICEF.

8. At its second regular session (25-29 March 1996), the Executive Board adopted 12 decisions, the following 5 of which could be of special interest to the Economic and Social Council.

UNFPA programming

9. In its decision 96/13, entitled "Future country programming process of the United Nations Population Fund", the Executive Board invited the Executive Director of UNFPA to consider ways of harmonizing the country programming process of the Fund with that of UNDP and UNICEF, and to submit to Member States, after consultations with UNDP and UNICEF, recommendations on the future country programming process of UNFPA, no later than the annual session 1997 of the Board.

10. In its decision 96/15, entitled "Allocation of resources to country programmes of the United Nations Population Fund", the Executive Board reaffirmed that, in order to achieve the goals of the International Conference on Population and Development, there was a need for adequate mobilization of resources at the national and international levels as well as of new and additional resources to developing countries from all sources, including multilateral, bilateral and private sources. The Board endorsed the approach for resource allocation as contained in the report of the Executive Director on a revised approach for the allocation of the resources of UNFPA to country

programmes (document DP/FPA/1996/15), including the indicators and threshold levels towards meeting the goals of the International Conference on Population and Development for the year 2005. The Board also endorsed the flexible approach to the allocation of relative shares of resources to the new categories of countries, and decided that UNFPA, while using this flexible approach, should give special attention to the least developed countries, low-income countries and Africa.

11. The Executive Board also decided that the allocation of resources should be based on a comprehensive assessment of the actual needs and requirements of countries, and should take fully into consideration coherent national programmes, plans and strategies on population and development and the need for external resources to complement national financial efforts in the area of population and development; and endorsed the procedure for categorization of countries into three groups as outlined in the report and approved the relative shares of resources among them.

12. It was recommended that the revised approach for resource allocation be introduced in a phased manner, taking into account both the stage of the current cycle of assistance and the status of programme implementation in individual countries; and that the Executive Director undertake a quinquennial review of the system for resource allocation, including a performance assessment of the indicators and their threshold levels, and to report thereon to the Executive Board starting in the year 2000.

UNAIDS

13. In its decision 96/16, entitled "Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)", the Executive Board requested UNDP to conclude without delay arrangements with the Joint United Nations Programme on Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS) relating to the financial, administrative and logistical support to work in the area of HIV/AIDS as well as to clarify the role and function of the national programme officers appointed to provide support to the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS.

Health

14. In its decision 96/17, entitled "Inter-agency coordination in health policy and programming", the Executive Board reaffirmed the need for close collaboration at all levels among UNICEF, the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNFPA on matters of mutual interest and related activities, including, inter alia, issues relating to follow-up to the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development; 1/ and encouraged the Executive Director to explore ways to further strengthen inter-agency coordination in the area of health policy and programming, in particular with UNICEF and WHO, in order to develop coordinated health policies and programmes, including reproductive health, in the context of the follow-up to the International Conference on Population and Development.

UNDP evaluation

15. In its decision 96/20, entitled "UNDP evaluation", the Executive Board stressed the fundamental importance of feeding back the lessons of monitoring and evaluation into planning and management in order to improve continually the quality of the organization's output, and the need for this concept to be shared by all its staff; and requested the Administrator, in this context, to ensure that the evaluation and monitoring were firmly established in the management culture of UNDP by, inter alia:

(a) Raising the profile of accountability and of staff and programme performance monitoring and evaluation in the Programme so that all its divisions recognized its vital importance;

(b) Reviewing and revising, as necessary, and in the light of "initiatives for change" and the successor programming arrangements, the systems and criteria for selecting subjects for evaluation; the handling in evaluations of the Programme's operational implementation of its areas of focus; opportunities for joint evaluations with other United Nations bodies; and the actions required of Programme personnel, including clear objective-setting at all levels;

(c) Linking compliance with monitoring and evaluation procedures with the Programme's personnel management and reporting systems;

(d) Reporting the results of strategic evaluations to the Executive Board.

16. The Executive Board called upon the Administrator to ensure that evaluation work had the necessary degree of independence to carry out objective evaluations; and to report to the Executive Board at its annual session 1997 on progress made in the implementation of this decision.

Functioning of the Board

17. In its annual session (6-17 May 1996), the Executive Board adopted 10 decisions, on, inter alia, its rules of procedure, documentation and functioning; UNDP and UNFPA mission statements, the UNFPA work plan for 1997-2000; UNDP agency support costs; and the United Nations Office for Project Services.

18. In its decision 96/25 entitled "Matters relating to rules of procedure, documentation and the functioning of the Executive Board", the Executive Board decided to convene an open-ended ad hoc working group on rules of procedure for the Executive Board, and requested the President of the Executive Board to report to the Executive Board at its third regular session 1996 on the progress achieved during the process with a view to reaching a final decision on rules of procedure at the first regular session of the Executive Board in January 1997. As regards its functioning, the Executive Board emphasized the need to ensure that the approach to the working methods of the Executive Board continued to be flexible and practical, and decided to introduce an annual work plan for the Executive Board and requested UNDP and UNFPA to prepare, for the third regular session, an outline of issues that could be considered by the Board in 1997, based on previous Board deliberations and the organizational priorities and

objectives set for 1997, with a view to adopting a work plan for the Board at the first regular session 1997, based on the proposals made on this matter by delegations during the 1996 annual session.

UNFPA work plan

19. In its decision 96/26, entitled "Work plan of the United Nations Population Fund for 1997-2000 and programme expenditure authority", the Executive Board endorsed the programme resource planning proposals of the Executive Director set out in paragraphs 7-18 of document DP/FPA/1996/18, and approved the request for the 1997 programme expenditure authority at a level equal to new programmable resources for 1997, currently estimated at $257 million. The Executive Board also endorsed the use of the following estimates of new programmable resources from regular resources for the 1998-2000 period: $279 million for 1998, $305 million for 1999, and $334 million for 2000; and endorsed as well the use of the following estimates of new programmable resources from multi-bilateral funding: $15 million per year for the years 1997-2000.

Mission statements

20. In its decision 96/28, the Executive Board endorsed the mission statement of UNFPA, taking into account the discussions that took place during the annual session 1996 of the Executive Board, as reflected in the report on that item of the session.

21. In its decision 96/29, the Executive Board endorsed the mission statement of UNDP.

Support costs

22. In its decision 96/31 entitled "UNDP: Agency support costs", the Executive Board reaffirmed the continued relevance and importance of the original key objectives of the agency support cost arrangements, which underlined that the arrangements should serve to (a) provide incentives for national execution and ensure that agency technical support services were available to Governments, particularly for nationally executed programmes/projects, (b) improve the upstream technical focus of agencies and reduce their administrative and operational involvement in programme/project implementation and (c) assign resources that would permit programme countries to exercise increased choice in programme/project implementation.

23. The Executive Board decided that, under the successor programming arrangements, the current guidelines for support costs would continue to apply and requested the Administrator to ensure that the agency support cost arrangements became more driven by country priorities and demands within the context of UNDP-supported programmes. The Executive Board decided that the support cost facilities would be administered directly by country offices in close collaboration and consultation with the programme countries and that the facilities should be used to encourage national execution of programmes and projects.

24. The Board also decided that UNDP, in order to simplify the system, should reimburse the cost of administrative and support services to the five large agencies (the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) the Department for Development Support and Management Services of the United Nations Secretariat and the United Nations Office for Project Services) with a maximum of 10 per cent, which experience had shown was the present average reimbursement rate for various inputs. Should the actual costs fall below 10 per cent, only the actual costs incurred would be reimbursed.

UNOPS

25. In its decision 96/33 entitled "United Nations Office for Project Services", the Executive Board encouraged the Executive Director to continue his efforts to make the United Nations Office for Project Services more innovative and cost-effective, as recommended by the Management Coordination Committee, and requested that the Executive Director keep the Executive Board apprised of the operational results and financial implications of the reorganization of the United Nations Office for Project Services within the framework of future annual reports, submitted through the Management Coordination Committee.

B. Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund

26. In 1996 the UNICEF Executive Board held two regular sessions.

27. At the first regular session (22-25 January 1996), the Executive Board adopted six decisions including the following which may be of special interest to the Economic and Social Council.

Mission statement

28. In its decision 96/1, entitled "UNICEF mission statement", the Executive Board reaffirmed the UNICEF mandate in terms of its serving as an "advocate for the protection of children's rights, to help meet their basic needs and to expand their opportunities to reach their full potential". The mission statement adopted by the Board states that UNICEF is guided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child 2/ in its endeavour to "establish children's rights as enduring ethical principles and international standards of behaviour towards children".

Emergency services

29. In its decision 96/2, entitled "UNICEF emergency services: mission and strategies", the Executive Board urged UNICEF, in close cooperation with the Department of Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat and other relevant agencies and organizations of the United Nations system, to facilitate the implementation of Economic and Social Council decision 1995/56, inter alia, through coordinated reporting to the 1996 substantive session of the Council and identified subjects of the operational papers to be prepared during 1996-1997.

Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women

30. In its decision 1996/3, entitled "Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women", the Executive Board encouraged UNICEF to strengthen its partnerships, coordination and collaboration with all agencies and entities of the United Nations system, each according to its mandate and to its own comparative advantage, and non-governmental organizations that were actively involved in the implementation of the Platform for Action 3/ of the Conference; and requested the Executive Director to report to the Executive Board in 1997 on the process undertaken to integrate the Beijing Platform for Action into UNICEF country programmes, taking into account the United Nations commitment to an integrated follow-up of United Nations conferences.

Report on implementation of General Assembly resolutions 47/199 and 50/120

31. In its second regular session (9-12 April 1996), the Executive Board, after consideration of the report of the Executive Director: annual report to the Economic and Social Council (E/ICEF/1996/10 (Part II)), by its decision 1996/8 decided to transmit it to the Council, together with the comments made by delegations at the session.

Budgetary issues

32. In its decision 1996/14, entitled "Additional allocation for the administrative and programme support budget for field offices", the Executive Board resolved that an additional allocation of $715,900 was approved in the region of Central and Eastern Europe, the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and the Baltic States for the 1996-1997 biennium; and that the secretariat was authorized to establish three liaison offices in Minsk (Belarus), in Moscow (Russian Federation) and in Kiev (Ukraine).

33. In its decision 1996/16, entitled "Harmonization of budget presentation", the Executive Board requested the Executive Director to submit the initial proposals on harmonization for action by the Executive Board at its first regular session in January 1997, through the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC). The Board also requested the Executive Director to present an oral progress report, with working papers, to the Executive Board at the third regular session in September 1996. The report would include a comparison of budget presentations and of definitions of terms used by UNICEF, UNDP and UNFPA, as well as an indication of steps that were needed for further harmonization.

34. The Board further requested that a joint progress report of the secretariats to the Economic and Social Council at its 1996 substantive session would include the progress made by the three agencies towards harmonization, taking into account the debates of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA and UNICEF during their second regular sessions of 1996.

C. Executive Board of the World Food Programme

35. In 1996, the Executive Board of WFP held one regular session (21 and 22 January 1996).

36. Board decisions are an integral part of its report. The outcome of the annual sessions of the Board will be made available in a revision (Rev.1) at a later stage. The Executive Board did not approve any formal decision as did the executive boards of other funds and programmes but incorporated its decisions into the report.

Revision of financial regulations

37. The Board reaffirmed that the Executive Director should implement the provisions of the new resourcing and long-term financing arrangements on an interim basis to the extent possible under the current financial regulations, subject to policy consideration of the proposals by the Economic and Social Council, and requested the Bureau, in consultation with the Secretariat, to start a process of informal consultation with interested countries and the European Community to form an open-ended working group to review the revised financial regulations and the general regulations, taking into account the advice of the FAO Finance Committee and ACABQ, when received. The working group should aim at holding its first meeting before the next session of the Board, in order to maintain momentum.

II. SUMMARY OF ACTIONS BY THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PARAGRAPH 55 OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 50/120

38. It may be recalled that in paragraph 55 of General Assembly resolution 50/120, the Assembly reaffirmed that the governing bodies of the funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations system should take appropriate action for the full implementation of the resolution, and requested the executive heads of those funds, programmes and specialized agencies, bearing in mind paragraph 46 of the resolution, to submit a yearly progress report to their governing bodies on measures taken and envisaged for the implementation of the resolution, as well as appropriate recommendations.

39. International Labour Organization (ILO): Since 1993, an account of principal measures taken to implement General Assembly resolution 47/199 has been submitted each year to the standing Committee on Technical Cooperation (CTC) of its Governing Body. The full text of the resolution was appended to a background paper submitted to the Committee in November 1993. Also, in pursuance of an International Labour Conference resolution on the role of ILO in technical cooperation adopted in 1993, the International Labour Office was requested to submit a strategy document on technical cooperation, taking into account the new horizons, constraints and opportunities that the programme was faced with. The strategy document was debated and endorsed by the Governing Body of ILO at its 261st session in November 1994. The strategy document specifically recalls (para. 19 in document GB 161/TC/2/5), among others, Assembly resolution 47/199. Through the Committee on Technical Cooperation, the

Governing Body has been reviewing the pace of implementation of the said resolution, and offering the Office its views and advice on the further initiatives that it considers appropriate.

40. International Maritime Organization (IMO): IMO will continue to implement progressively General Assembly resolutions 47/199 and 50/120 in order to improve the substantive quality and content of its Integrated Technical Cooperation Programme (ITCP) and to harmonize the Organization's development assistance policies and procedures with those of other agencies and organizations in the common system. Information on the progress made in this regard will be submitted regularly to the member States of IMO through the Technical Cooperation Committee, the Council and the Assembly of the Organization.

41. The Technical Cooperation Committee, at its forty-first session in June 1995, considered and approved a report on the implementation by IMO of General Assembly resolution 47/199. Subsequently, the report was submitted to the eighteenth extraordinary session of the Council and to the nineteenth regular session of the IMO Assembly, both of which were held in November 1995. The Assembly welcomed the report and supported the Technical Cooperation Committee in approving it.

42. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO): During the 149th session of the Executive Board of UNESCO (April 1996), the Director-General informed the Board concerning recent decisions and activities of the organizations of the United Nations system of relevance to UNESCO (document 149 EX/23). Furthermore, at its 150th session, to be held in September 1996, the Board will receive a more detailed document, entitled "Cooperation for development policies and activities implemented with extrabudgetary funding", which will contain a more refined analysis of General Assembly resolution 50/120.

43. United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO): The steps taken by UNIDO for the implementation of General Assembly resolution 50/120 (and, previously, Assembly resolution 47/199) were reviewed at the fifteenth session of the Industrial Development Board (IDB) which took place in Vienna from 6 to 10 May 1996, and the subject will in future also feature regularly in the agendas of UNIDO's policy-making organs.

44. World Health Organization (WHO): WHO takes note of the request of the General Assembly to take appropriate action for the full implementation of Assembly resolution 50/120 and to report to its governing bodies on measures taken or envisaged for its implementation. It is WHO's intention to undertake the necessary steps in this connection.

III. SUMMARY OF INFORMATION PROVIDED BY THE ORGANIZATIONS OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM IN ACCORDANCE WITH PARAGRAPH 30 OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 50/120

45. It may be recalled that in paragraph 30 of General Assembly resolution 50/120, the Assembly stressed the important role of the specialized agencies of the United Nations system in transferring and facilitating the necessary

technical and substantive expertise to support the national execution of United Nations-funded programmes and projects, and invited the Secretary-General, in collaboration with the heads of specialized agencies, to inform the Economic and Social Council of the measures taken by those specialized agencies in response to Assembly resolution 47/199, in particular as regards national execution.

46. It may also be recalled that the development funds and programmes of the United Nations are reporting to this substantive session of the Economic and Social Council on national execution as part of their respective reports which follow a common format.

47. International Labour Organization (ILO): ILO has, since 1992, put into place a new policy, the Active Partnership Policy, the main thrust of which is closer cooperation and coordination between ILO and its constituents and, through such cooperation, the strengthening of national capacity. For the purpose of effective implementation of this policy, 14 subregional multidisciplinary teams (MTDs) have been established in the different regions of the world, and they are now the major means of ILO to respond to the needs of its tripartite constituency. Also, as a part of the Active Partnership Policy, the Office is involved in the formulation of country objectives in all member States in close consultation with the constituents concerned. This exercise will establish the priority of ILO's programme with capacity-building as one of the major criteria. Concerning the programme approach, ILO is actively contributing to the system-wide current effort, led by the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC), Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions (CCPOQ), to forge new, practical and usable procedures designed to give effect to it.

48. International Maritime Organization (IMO): The General Assembly reiterated that national execution should be the norm for programmes and projects supported by the United Nations system, taking into account the needs and capacities of recipient countries. The Assembly also stressed the need for the United Nations system to give increased priority to building up and/or enhancing the recipient countries' capacity to undertake national execution.

49. Since IMO does not have funds of its own to assign to recipient Governments for the execution of technical assistance programmes and projects, it is unlikely that this particular requirement can be totally fulfilled by the Organization.

50. None the less, in adopting the Integrated Technical Cooperation Programme (ITCP) at its thirty-ninth session, the Committee specifically endorsed the principle that the ITCP's components may be assured by national government execution or execution by subregional or regional institutions. Accordingly, IMO does utilize national expertise and capabilities in the execution of such activities, and it supports the building-up of capacity for national execution by endeavouring always to link its catalytic assistance to the overall maritime development programmes executed by national, subregional and regional institutions themselves.

51. International Trade Centre (ITC): Responsive to guidelines established by UNDP and systems adopted by the respective national Governments, ITC is

increasingly reflecting the principle of "national execution" (NEX) in UNDP-financed programme/project design and implementation. However, a number of conceptual, operational and monitoring problems are still being experienced as many developing countries do not yet have the adequate institutional structures, management procedures or personnel (in terms both of numbers and of relevant experience) to cope efficiently with the complexities and demands of this new system. Furthermore, while some countries apply the principle of the total programme approach and national execution to all sources/projects of technical cooperation, in most countries existing NEX development planning structures/ procedures do not provide for the integration of activities other than those falling strictly within the UNDP country programme (excluding, for example, projects executed through bilateral aid, development financing institutions, multilateral organizations, trust funds and so forth). Even if NEX is the policy of the Government concerned, experience has shown that there is often very little exchange of information and/or coordination between the ministry responsible for planning and that responsible for the technical area concerned. This thus often results in a heterogeneous "patchwork" of activities, often poorly integrated, occasionally overlapping and even less well known to development decision/policy makers and ministries than to those directly involved. Efforts of ITC to ensure more "national responsibility" for our activities in terms of execution and to better integrate our programmes/projects into overall development programmes - as well as to undertake joint programmes with other technical cooperation bodies - meet with mixed results, depending largely on personal relations rather than on effective interfacing systems.

52. United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat): In terms of paragraph 30 of General Assembly resolution 50/120, the Centre has consistently supported the principle of national execution as an instrument to progressively lessen the dependency of countries on external assistance. Over the years, the percentage of projects where the Centre appeared as cooperating agency rather than as executing agency has increased substantially. However we should like to stress that, as is correctly indicated in paragraph 30 of the Assembly resolution, national execution is not a goal but an instrument to facilitate the transfer to the country level of United Nations agencies' technical and substantive expertise. The implementation of the national execution modality has at times limited the role of agencies to providing ad hoc inputs and sectoral expertise which is crucial in assisting national authorities at the policy level. This is obviously especially true for small agencies without separate field representation which can only establish a substantive presence at the national level through the opportunities for technical assistance afforded to them by the execution of substantive field programmes. In a world in which the United Nations increasingly appears as just one of many providers of technical expertise available in the market, it should be emphasized that our unique asset lies not in the ad hoc provision of specific technical inputs but rather in our continued ability to extend to member States the benefit of an aggregate knowledge resulting from global research and the cross-fertilization of the results of this experience. Ways and means must be found, within the national execution modality, to enhance rather than limit this foremost comparative advantage of agencies of the United Nations system.

53. United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP): UNDCP is supportive of the increased use of national resources, both as a cost-effective measure and as a way of building national capacity. As a relatively small player in United Nations system development activities, UNDCP will of course follow any revised guidelines that are developed and would in fact welcome them, especially with regard to measures that promote the training and use of national project personnel, including consultants.

54. On the other hand, the experience of UNDCP with national execution is not entirely satisfactory. Although there have been successful cases, the more common situation is one beset by problems of delivery and accountability because of capacity weaknesses on the counterpart side. While there remains full sympathy with the reasoning behind national execution, it may be time for the system to state firmly the limits that are inherent in the approach as a means of cost-effective technical cooperation in a period of shrinking resources. Perhaps some new guidelines would help, but the possibility of success is limited, except in certain rather specific situations. It should be added that, with relation to drug control, some aspects of technical cooperation work are inappropriate for national execution.

55. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO): In the role of enhancement of national capacities the UNESCO evaluation will address the following issues:

(a) Analysis of specific actions carried out by UNESCO for the purpose of better using national capacities and creating a participatory process, and enhancing the technical capacities of nationals in dealing with policy issues;

(b) Review of the use of national capacities in various modalities of execution of projects;

(c) Results obtained in terms of capacity-building, role of nationals in the process and policy documents produced.

56. United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO): UNIDO has continued to participate in system-wide and interorganizational initiatives to assess the impact of national execution on its activities and to improve related procedures, based on experience. In that vein, it has recently contributed to an evaluation exercise undertaken by UNDP. It has also provided comments to the Joint Inspection Unit in respect of a study carried out in 1994. Among the main lessons drawn so far, the following should be highlighted: (a) early involvement of technical and specialized agencies in the design and formulation stage creates a good basis for determining the nature and extent of agency participation in programme and/or project implementation, (b) the role of national project directors is essential in ensuring good coordination of inputs, (c) the provision of technical support services by the agencies, such as those funded by the UNDP Technical Support Services (TSS)-2 facility, greatly contributes to efficient and effective delivery, (d) the existence of adequate institutional and managerial capacity in the country is an essential element for success and (e) clear systems of accountability and specific guidelines in the implementation of the national execution modality are urgently required.

57. Universal Postal Union (UPU): As for measures taken by UPU in response to General Assembly resolution 47/199 as regards national execution, UPU has taken a series of measures since 1991 to increase the national capacity of the developing countries. Thus, the recipient countries of the UPU's multi-year integrated projects were encouraged to ensure management of certain project elements.

58. World Health Organization (WHO): Concerning paragraph 30 of General Assembly resolution 50/120, WHO recognizes its important role as technical agency in the field of international health and continues to carry out technical cooperation activities with its member States. Regarding the specific subject of national execution, the outstanding issue is still the need to formulate a clear and acceptable definition of the term "national execution" in order to prevent varying interpretations by individual United Nations agencies responsible for applying it. In this connection, WHO encourages its country representatives to establish a dialogue with their counterparts in the United Nations system at the country level to ensure a common understanding and definition of the concept of national execution.

Notes

1/ Report of the International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, 5-13 September 1994 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.95.XIII.18), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

2/ General Assembly resolution 44/25, annex.

3/ Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995 (A/CONF.177/20 and Add.1), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.